

**Effect of Internal Marketing Strategy on Employee Performance among Selected Public Universities in Kenya**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper was to analyse the effect of internal marketing strategy on employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya.

**Design/Methodology:** A total of 384 employees were sampled from both administrative and academic staff positions, employing stratified random sampling proportionately from the selected four Universities. The study used primary data which was largely quantitative, collected by use of structured questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. Findings reveal a significant relationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya.

**Findings:** Findings reveal a significant relationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya.

**Theoretical implications:** This study adds value to theory by not only looking at financial development attributes but by empirically analyzing the extent of the effect of internal marketing on employee performance. The study validates the main theory underpinning the study that is the Resource Based View. As established in the study, employees across various public higher education institutions are the key resources thereof, tasked with the mandate to produce both competitive and marketable graduates.

**Originality/Value:** The paper fills an important gap in academic literature by providing insights into the effect internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya. This paper provides policy makers with evidence on the implications of internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya.

**Key words:** Internal marketing, employee performance, public universities, Kenya

**Introduction**

Employee performance is critical to the success of any organization and public universities are not an exception. It is therefore imperative for an organization to adopt strategies that will not only increase employee commitment but also enhance the employee's performance. If an organization is to achieve its goals, it must not only have the required resources, it must also use them effectively (Saul, 2010). Due to this realization, organizations are seeking to understand how one of the last truly competitive resources, their human resources, can be managed to perform to their best and therefore enhance employee performance and competitive advantage (Boxall *et al.*, 2007). According to Ahmed (2009) it enhances employee performance by using a market like approach to align and motivate the employees to be committed to their organizations. It is probable that committed workforce achieves better results in their tasks and therefore delivers better services (Halil and Cem, 2010).

Universities and higher education systems across the globe are particularly taking leading roles in their States' economic development efforts, through among other avenues, innovation and Knowledge Transfer that helps businesses grow and prosper. As such, staff competence in the academia is particularly often in the center of attention in high educational institutions (Akuezilo, 2010; Davenport, 2013; Kaczynski, 2013). The challenges experienced by universities currently, such as large student enrolments, globalization of education with inherent competition for staff and students has

called for competence in delivery of quality education with a view to produce competent, world-class graduates in the wake of highly dynamic economic growth driven by science and fast paced technology (Maicibi, 2013, McNamara, 2014). The emerging issues of brain drain, have further placed pressure on academic staff to perform and improve the status of the university in the global academia (Kaczynski, 2013).

Thus, university staff, both administrative and academic, are required to prove their credibility and continued retention in university employment based on the strength and magnitude of their research activities, teaching and consultancy services among other capabilities (Ng'ongah, 2012). Employee performance has been a contentious issue in most countries due to poor work ethics, which have developed gradually, poor co-ordination between departments among other factors (Davenport, 2013). There are always gaps between the expected and actual performance (Akuezilo, 2010). Although several studies have been conducted on employee performance in different contexts mostly with a view to understanding what factors contribute to its enhancement, it remains unexplored in literature how internal marketing strategy and employee commitment both influence employee performance in the academia.

Introduced by Berry *et al.* (1976), the main concept of Internal Marketing Strategy is that employees are internal clientele, and work is a product that should meet the needs and requirements of clientele to achieve organizational goals (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). That is to say, the main essence of Internal Marketing Strategy is to accept this point that it should relate with employee like internal clientele (Grayson, 2010). Over the years, the concept of Internal Marketing Strategy has experienced a remarkable advance, with scholars having rapidly explored the concept with a view to produce a unified definition for the same. However, as yet, scholars have not been able to create a single universally agreed Internal Marketing Strategy definition. In the present study, Internal Marketing Strategy is defined as means of involving staff at all levels in effective marketing programmes by enabling them to understand their role within the organization. This study contributes to the understanding of internal marketing as a strategy and focuses on its effect on both employee commitment and performance in public universities.

Having a loyal foundation of satisfied clientele within a competitive environment, increases revenues, decreases costs and ultimately improves organizational performance (Armstrong, 2010). Thus, to have satisfied clientele, employee commitment is necessary. The idea of committed employees for the benefit of satisfied clientele is developed through Internal Marketing Strategy. The concept of internal marketing strategy was based around viewing jobs as if they were "internal products" offered to employees. Moreover, the logic of Internal Marketing Strategy states that employees are the internal costumers of their organizations who had needs to be satisfied; and those needs were closely connected to their jobs (Panigyrakis, 2009).

Numerous studies have been conducted to establish the factors that influence employee performance. In their study on the effect of employee development on employee performance, Abdul and Aamer (2011), found a positive relationship between the two variables. A study by Amir and Amen (2013) on the effect of training on employee performance reaffirmed the preposition that training has a positive effect on employee performance. In order to further the discourse on employee performance, Solomon and Sandhya (2010) studied employee engagement as the key to improving employee performance. The study found out that engaged employees are more attached to their organizations. Wanjau and Kyongo (2013) also studied the contribution of motivational management to employee performance in the Vehicle Body Building Industry in Kenya. The study concluded that stress free environment as a management method of motivation leads to increased employee performance. This forms the

background that the present study set out to investigate the effect of Internal marketing Strategy on employee performance in selected public universities in Kenya.

## **1.2 Theory and Hypotheses Development**

### **Resource-Based View Theory**

The resource-based view of the firm (RBV) and the resultant resource-based theory (RBT) provide an important framework for explaining and predicting the basis of a firm's competitive advantage and performance (Barney *et al.*, 2011; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005). In the past decade, the applications of resource-based logic in marketing have grown exponentially; in the 1990s, only 19 articles in marketing explicitly referenced the RBT or RBV, but in the 2000s, that number increased to 104. In just 2012–14, more than 50 published conceptual and empirical marketing articles drew on RBT. This upward trend indicates the growing importance of RBT to marketing. While top management journals have dedicated special issues solely to RBT (issues 17(1), 27(6), and 37(5) of *Journal of Management*), there is a need to synthesize the fragmented applications of RBT in marketing (Ramaswami *et al.*, 2009).

Historically, RBT has been applied most frequently in three domains: marketing strategy (Fang *et al.*, 2011), international marketing (Ruiz-Ortega and García-Villaverde, 2008), and marketing innovation (Barney *et al.*, 2011). The primary motivation for using RBT in various marketing domains is the compelling framework it offers for integrating multiple, dissimilar resources to explain synergistic, differential effects on performance and the contingencies associated with each (Fang *et al.*, 2011). As much as 70% of a firm's market value may come from its intangible resources, and organizational performance increasingly seems tied to intangible resources, such as customer relationships or brand equity (Barney *et al.*, 2011). Extant research also suggests that the greatest benefits accrue when externally focused, market-based resources are complemented by internal resources (Slotegraaf and Dickson, 2005), in line with Day's (1994) argument that to "exploit" outside-in capabilities, "there has to be a match" with inside-out capabilities.

### **Hypothesis Development**

#### **Internal Marketing Strategy and Employee Commitment**

Kelemen and Papasolomou-Doukakis (2004) established the fact that firms can satisfy external customers effectively, if there is successful exchange with its employees (Lu *et al.*, 2007). Some scholars have also found an extrinsic link between the satisfaction of internal employees and that of external customers (Palmatier *et al.*, 2006; Heskett *et al.*, 2008). At the heart of the internal marketing concept is the notion that employees represent an internal market within an organization (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2003; Lu *et al.*, 2007). This internal market can be regarded as a segment of employees that needs to be informed, developed and motivated in order to elicit their commitment to organizational goals (Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2002).

As a result of its perceived benefits, there has been an increased interest among marketing scholars and practitioners alike, seeking to understand the antecedents of employee commitment (Mishra *et al.*, 2010; Abzari, 2011; Ting, 2011). For instance, Chang and Chang (2009) found that internal marketing was positively related to job commitment of nurses in Taiwan. However, an extensive review of the extant literature suggests a dearth of research linking internal marketing practices and employee commitment especially in the financial services industry. Moreover, the reviews also revealed that marketing scholars have not been consistent with the conceptualization of the dimensions of internal marketing. For instance, Chang and Chang (2009) conceptualized internal marketing into employee-oriented measures, internal communication and external activities.

Similarly, Clark (2001) investigated employee rewards as an internal marketing dimension while Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) investigated communication and empowerment as the dimensions of internal marketing. In addition, Gounaris (2008a) also postulates communication, rewards and training as the dimensions of internal marketing. As a result of these different conceptualizations, results from studies on internal marketing have mostly remained fragmented, making it difficult to advance the theory of internal marketing.

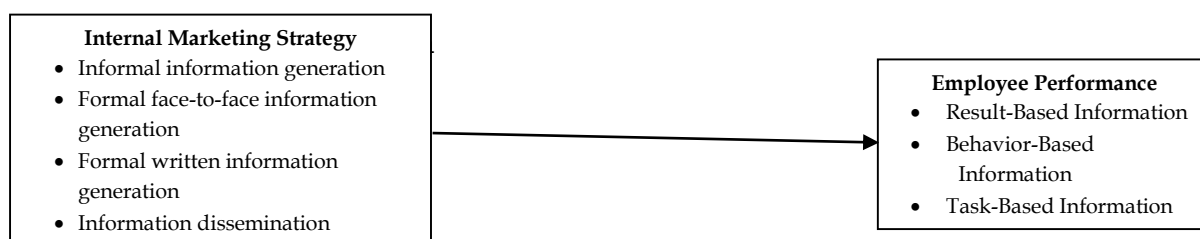
*Hypothesis 1; Internal marketing is not significantly affecting employee performance.*

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

To achieve the study objectives, the various aspects under study are conceptualized in figure 2.4 below. From the conceptual framework, two gaps can be clearly noted: How Internal Marketing Strategy (independent variable) influences employee performance (dependent variable) among selected public universities in Kenya; and how this influence is moderated by employee commitment (moderating variable). The study therefore endeavored to address the gap.

### Independent variable

### Dependent variable



## 3.0 Methods and Data

This study is multivariate in nature, incorporating both descriptive and explanatory designs. An explanatory research design was adopted since the study attempts to connect ideas to understand cause and effect (Stigler, 2002), which in the present study involves determining whether significant associations exist between the three conceptualized variables namely IMS, EC and employee performance as stated in the hypotheses.

The target population for the study comprised all the employees in the four public universities with their main campuses in Nairobi County namely University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Multimedia University College and the Technical University of Kenya. Whereas Kenyatta University falls outside the scope of Nairobi City, as it is in Kiambu County, the institution was conveniently included in the study for two reasons: to provide a balance in the institutions selected in that the study aimed to include two long serving public universities (University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University) and two recently established public universities (Multimedia University College and the Technical University of Kenya) for representability purposes; and due to proximity of the same to Nairobi City County hence easy to reach. According to Ary et al. (2010) *convenience sampling* is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The total target population as per respective university human resources departments totaled 13,873. The study specifically targeted employees from both administrative and academic staff positions.

### 3.1 Sample Size and Sampling Design

Owing to the anticipated large number of employees (13,873), the study employed the Fisher et al. (1983) formula for determining sample sizes in large populations. This is as shown below:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n = the required sample size, when the target population is more than 10,000

Z = is standard normal deviate at the required confidence level, 0.05, which gives 1.96

p = is the proportion of the target population estimated to have the characteristics being measured when one is not sure, so one takes middle ground (0.5)

q = 1-p (1 - 0.5 = 0.5)

d is the level of statistical significance, which is a standard set at 0.05

Therefore  $n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384$

The study thus reached a total of 384 employees, equally distributed across the selected public universities. In order to reach employees across the various departments, the researcher approached respective study areas' human resource departments from which the organization's structure was acquired. This enabled the researcher determine the number of employees from various departments across the selected institutions. This included both the administrative and academic staff.

### 3.2 Validity

Validity can be measured by the extent the data obtained accurately reflects the theoretical or conceptual concepts; that is if the measurements gotten are consistent with the expectations. The present study performed content validity testing which consisted of administering the questionnaire to 10 expert researchers and consulting with the university supervisors who gave their feedback on the extent to which the indicators correctly represent the concept of the study. Their feedback was then used to improve the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Reliability

Errors likely to affect reliability were interviewer/interviewee fatigue, bias from the interviewer and inaccuracy of the instrument in use, inaccuracy in scoring by the researcher and finally, unexplained errors whose source cannot be determined. In this regard, the study conducted a pilot study across five organizations to pre-test the questionnaire prior to the main data collection exercise with a view to check for errors and test the tools for reliability. Cronbach alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency, was used to test the internal reliability of the measurement instrument

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Preliminary Screening of Data

#### Response Rate

The study achieved a response rate of 83.1% with 319 respondents reached, out of the 384 targeted. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. The data contains responses from both administrative and academic positions, all totaling the 319 respondents reached. Due to the number of variables that were considered, the sample size was deemed large enough.

The study performed the Missing Value Analysis (MVA) with a view to check for any missing data pattern as well as the respective magnitude of the missing values. The operation was modeled to underscore pattern of missing values and to replace them in the data set. The subsequent univariate statistics computation revealed that the percentage and count of missing values for all items were less than 5%.

#### **Bivariate and Multivariate Normality, Skewness and Kurtosis**

Normality of variables in the data set was examined using a measure of skewness and kurtosis. Whereas the basis of whether data is normally distributed varies, as a rule of thumb, the values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). Skewness values range from 2.00-3.00 and kurtosis value ranging from 7.0-21.00 show that they are moderately non-normal while values above 3.00 for skewness and greater than 21.00 for kurtosis show extreme lack of normality (Bryne, 1998). Accordingly, the score of skewness and kurtosis on each item was analyzed and reported. Items found to lack normality were evaluated and accordingly, either transformed using log-transformation, removed from further analysis or retained. All items were found to be within the acceptable range.

#### **Test of multicollinearity**

To check for correlated variables, multicollinearity was tested using variance inflation factor (VIF). A VIF for all the independent and dependent variables less than 3 ( $VIF \leq 3$ ) shows no multicollinearity while a VIF of more than 10 ( $VIF \geq 10$ ) indicates a problem of multicollinearity (Cohen *et al.*, 2003). In this regard, the present study performed a multicollinearity test with a view to identify variables with a high correlation among themselves. All variables were found to be optimally correlated.



## 4.2 Demographic Information

	Frequency	Percent
Male	153	48.0
Female	166	52.0
Total	319	100.0

Management level	Frequency	Percent
Top management level	129	40.4
Middle management level	190	59.6
Total	319	100.0

Age categories	Frequency	Percent
Below 30 years	43	13.5
30-40 years	131	41.1
41-50 years	98	30.7
51-60 years	47	14.7
Total	319	100.0

Length of service	Frequency	Percent
0-5	86	26.9
6-10	69	21.6
11-15	66	20.7
16-20	49	15.4
Over 20 years	49	15.4
Total	319	99.7

Highest education level	Frequency	Percent
Primary Certificate	2	0.6
Diploma	158	49.5
Undergraduate	108	33.9
Postgraduate	51	16.0
Total	319	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2015

In order to show the gender distribution and parity across the institutions included in the survey, the study sought to determine the respondents' gender. Respondents were thus required to indicate by checking either male or female response categories provided. As presented in table 4.1, female respondents, 166 (52.0%), registered the most as compared to their male counterparts, 153 (48.0%). It follows then from the findings, that the females make the dominant gender. This is a notable finding with the implication that the empowerment of the female gender has made great strides in the country much to their numbers matching those of their male counterparts in key managerial positions.

Respondents were asked to indicate their management levels in order to further ascertain representation and diversity thereof in perspectives. To this end, two managerial cadres were targeted in the present study purposively owing to their expected possession of the information of interest with respect to the variables. The analysis revealed that a majority, 59.6% of the respondents were in the middle management level while 40.4% belonged to the senior management level. This indicates the diverse perspectives as informed by tasks and duties characteristic of the respective management levels. Both categories were deemed adequate for analysis as regards the response rates and

representative of employees across the two levels of management among the institutions surveyed, and by extension, similar institution in the country.

The study deemed age an important demographic characteristic in the present study with a view to establish any pertinent trends in the variables under study as well as to have an overview of the age distribution thereof. Age was also considered a relative indicator of respondents' length of experience hence reliability of responses. Results as illustrated in table 4.1 reveal that a majority of respondents, 41.1% fall within the 30 - 40 years age category. This is quite distantly followed by those within the 41 - 50 years age category as indicated by 30.7% of the respondents. Only 14.7% and 13.5% of respondents fall between 51 - 60 years and less than 30 years categories respectively. As such, it can be deduced that age, across the institutions surveyed is majorly youthful to middle age, distributed, between 30 and 50 years. A rich diversity in experience was thus established.

With some level of working experience necessary in establishing the study objectives, the study found it appropriate to establish the length of service of the respondents, in years, serving at their respective institutions. This would ascertain that responses were already informed by diverse experience owing to respondents' respective lengths of service. The study found that a majority of respondents, 26.9% have worked in the study area for less than 5 years. This was followed by those having worked for between 6 and 10, as indicated by 21.6% of the respondents while 20.7% of the respondents have worked for 11 and 15 years. Only 15.4% of the respondents were found to have worked in their respective institutions for either between 16 and 20 years and over 20 years. The results present a rather fair skewed distribution across the years representing the length of experience. With a majority of respondents having worked for at least 5 years, responses can be deemed as informed by adequate experience in the study area.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their highest levels of education. This would serve to show the academic qualification among respondents in their respective positions, as well as a general overview of education levels among respondents in their respective study areas. From the findings, a majority of respondents, 49.5% of respondents indicated having attained a diploma level, followed by 33.9% having attained either an undergraduate degree. A further 15.3% indicated having attained a diploma or higher national diploma. Overall, the study area can be said to comprise staff from relatively high levels of education. This was expected as institutions of higher learning, which formed the study areas, are expected to sample professionals from relatively high levels of education. To attend to their task mandate of teaching, research, administration and community service effectively, universities need sufficient academic staff with rich academic backgrounds to work effectively.

### **4.3 Employee Performance**

In this section, the study sought the respondents' perception regarding the various aspects defining employee performance. The set of statements used in this regard was first pretested in a pilot study in order to determine its reliability, evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha which measures the internal consistency.

#### **Reliability Test Results**

The Alpha measures internal consistency by establishing if certain items measure the same construct. Nunnally (1978) established the Alpha value threshold at 0.7 which the study benchmarked against. Cronbach Alpha was established for every objective in order to determine if each scale (objective) would produce consistent results should the research be done later on. Table 4.2 below presents the findings.



**Table 4.2: Reliability Coefficients**

Composite scale	Initial items	Final items	Grand mean (Standard deviation)	Initial Cronbach's Alpha	Final Cronbach's Alpha
Result Based Measures of Employee Performance	6	6	(M=25.818; SD=3.5018)	.817	.817
Trait Based Measures of Employee Performance	9	9	(M=38.771; SD=4.4419)	.796	.796
Behavior Based Measures of Employee Performance	6	6	(M=25.850; SD=3.4997)	.821	.821
Employee performance	21	21	(M=90.439; SD=9.4634)	.891	.891

Source: Pilot Study, 2015

The reliability coefficients table shows that all the sub-scales for employee performance variable were significant, having an alpha above the prescribed threshold of 0.7. Behavior Based Measures, with 6 items had the highest reliability ( $\alpha=0.821$ ) followed by Result Based Measures ( $\alpha=0.817$ ) also with 6 items, then Trait Based Measures ( $\alpha=0.796$ ) with 9 items. The complete Employee performance scale, with 21 items was also reliable at a Cronbach alpha level of 0.891. The study thus found that Employee performance variable as measured in the questionnaire was reliable and could thus be used in the main study and therefore analysis.

### Descriptive Statistics for Employee Performance

The study sought the respondents' perception regarding the various aspects defining employee performance. To this end, respondents were asked to respond to pertinent statements posed by indicating the level at which they agreed with the same, as applies in their respective institutions. Responses were given on a five-point likert scale (where 1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree). The scores of 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' have been taken to represent a statement disagreed with by a majority of respondents, equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.5. The score of 'Neutral' has been taken to represent a statement affirmed to moderately, equivalent to a mean score of 2.6 to 3.4. The score of 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' have been taken to represent a statement highly agreed with by a majority of respondents, equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.4. Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below present the findings.

**Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Result Based Measures of Employee Performance**

Result Based Information	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
				S.E=.137	S.E=.272
I adequately complete assigned duties and in time	319	4.354	.7460	-1.229	1.889
I engage in activities that will directly affect my performance evaluation	319	4.342	.7602	-1.269	1.968
I adequately perform essential duties	319	4.351	.7538	-1.257	1.939
I fulfill responsibilities specified in my job description	319	4.332	.7826	-1.372	2.416
I meet formal performance requirements of the job	319	4.216	.8974	-1.517	3.051
I performs tasks that are expected of me	319	4.223	.8888	-1.534	3.209
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.303</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

As presented in table 4.3 above, with a grand mean of 4.303, a majority of respondents were found to highly agree with all the pertinent statements posed with respect to Result Based Measures of Employee Performance in their respective institutions. The foregoing finding is of the implication that respondent demonstrate superior job performances in their respective stations. This is commendable as such performance is necessary to address key practices in the academia including coverage of term projects and course content, effective assessment and timely delivery of examination results

**Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics for Trait Based Measures of Employee Performance**

Trait-Based Information	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
				S.E=.137	S.E=.272
I am flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
I am clear about my own and other people's feelings	319	4.351	.7579	-1.295	2.063
I am capable of controlling my emotions	319	4.219	.8878	-1.530	3.212
I am reflective and less likely to give in to my urges	319	4.357	.7424	-1.241	1.971
I am capable of having fulfilling personal relationships	319	4.342	.7602	-1.269	1.968
I am successful and self-confident	319	4.219	.8913	-1.518	3.127
I trust my coping skills in the face of adversity	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
I am relatively quick in coming to a decision	319	4.339	.7636	-1.256	1.887
I trust my verbal communication skills to get important point across	319	4.223	.8888	-1.534	3.209
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.3079</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

As presented in table 4.4 above, with a grand mean of 4.3079, a majority of respondents were found to highly agree with all the pertinent statements posed with respect to trait Based Measures of Employee Performance in their respective institutions. The result implies considerably high performance in respondents' trait-based information. Leveraging trait-based performance in the academia may translate to improved lecturer-student interaction, improved supervision and therefore improved academic performance and levels of research and publications and as a result, academic standards and performance among students.

**Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for Behavior-Based Measures of Employee Performance**

Behavior Based information	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
I easily conform to the organizational policy	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
I consider myself very attentive and vigilant	319	4.351	.7579	-1.295	2.063
I occasionally go above and beyond my call of duty when need be	319	4.223	.8888	-1.534	3.209
I am effective with my organization and planning	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
I trust my judgment and logic in solving a problem	319	4.351	.7579	-1.295	2.063
I easily contribute toward a teamwork environment	319	4.204	.9073	-1.533	3.101
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.3085</b>				

Source: Survey Data, 2015

Further, as presented in table 4.5 above, with a grand mean of 4.3085, a majority of respondents were found to highly agree with all the pertinent statements posed with respect to behavior based measures of employee performance in their respective institutions. Behavior based performance is key among university staff. This is so, as both academic performance among students and overall organizational performance through such practices as research and consultancy rely on the team composition and conformity among staff to laid-down policies and systems aimed at enhanced productivity and contribution to community and national economic development.

Very high employee performance levels were noted across the four institutions surveyed with respect to the various conceptualized aspects of employee performance including Result based information, Trait-based information and Behavior-based information. From the foregoing statistics, a majority of respondents, and therefore employees in the institutions can be deemed as exhibiting high performance levels as regards their job output and results, their respective traits as well as behavior. The findings were thus deemed adequate enough to establish how the two other study variables, that is, internal marketing strategy and employee commitment affect the same.

#### 4.5 Internal Marketing Strategy

In this section, the researcher sought the respondents' perception regarding the various aspects constituting Internal Marketing Strategy. The set of statements used in this regard was first pretested in a pilot study in order to determine its reliability, evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha which measures the internal consistency.

##### 4.5.1 Reliability Test Results

The reliability coefficients table shows that all the sub-scales for internal marketing strategy variable were significant, having an alpha above the prescribed threshold of 0.7. Information Dissemination, with 3 items had the highest reliability ( $\alpha=0.730$ ) followed by Formal written information generation ( $\alpha = 0.729$ ) and Response ( $\alpha = 0.729$ ) both having 3 items each, then Informal Information Generation ( $\alpha = 0.728$ ) with 3 items while Formal face-to-face Information Generation had the lowest reliability ( $\alpha = 0.711$ ). The complete Internal Marketing Strategy scale, with 8 items was also reliable at a Cronbach alpha level of 0.701. The study thus found that Internal Marketing Strategy variable as measured in the questionnaire was reliable and could thus be used in the main study and therefore analysis.

**Table 4.6: Reliability Coefficients**

Composite scale	Initial items	Final items	Grand mean (Standard deviation)	Initial Cronbach's Alpha	Final Cronbach's Alpha
Informal Information Generation	3	3	(M=12.884; SD=1.9689)	.728	.728
Formal face-to-face Information Generation	3	3	(M=13.031; SD=1.3289)	.711	.711
Formal written information generation	3	3	(M=12.931; SD=1.9300)	.729	.729
Information Dissemination	3	3	(M=12.934; SD=1.9325)	.730	.730
Response	3	3	(M=12.918; SD=1.9344)	.729	.729
Internal Marketing Strategy	15	15	(M=34.906; SD=3.3820)	.582	.701

Source: Pilot Study, 2015

### Descriptive Statistics for Internal Marketing Strategy

The study sought respondents' perception regarding the various aspects defining internal marketing strategy. To this end, respondents were asked to respond to pertinent statements posed by indicating the level at which they agreed with the same, as applies in their respective institutions. Responses were given on a five-point likert scale (where 1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Tables 4.7, 8, 9, 9 and 10 below present the findings.

**Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Informal Information Generation Measure of Internal Marketing Strategy**

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
<b>Informal information generation</b>					
When at work the management tries to find out what employees want from the organization	319	4.332	.7786	-1.340	2.326
When at work the management tries to find out employees' real feelings about their jobs	319	4.329	.7698	-1.266	1.908
When at work the management regularly talks to staff to find out about their work	319	4.223	.8923	-1.521	3.123
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.295</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

On informal information generation, as table 4.7 above illustrates, with a grand mean of 4.295.

**Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics for Formal face-to-face Information Generation Measure of Internal Marketing Strategy**

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
<b>Formal face-to-face information generation</b>					
In this institution we have regular staff appraisals in which we discuss what staff want	319	4.392	.7225	-1.303	2.310
In this institution management meets with employees at least once a year to find out what expectations they have of their jobs for the future	319	4.392	.7225	-1.303	2.310
In this institution management interact directly with our employees to find out how to make them more satisfied.	319	4.248	.8457	-1.501	3.376
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.344</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

As tabulated in table 4.8 above, on formal face-to-face information generation, with a grand mean of 4.344.

**Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for Formal written information generation Measure of Internal Marketing Strategy**

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
<b>Formal written information generation</b>					
In this institution we do a lot of internal market research	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
In this institution our employees are surveyed at least once a year to assess the quality of employment	319	4.351	.7579	-1.295	2.063
In this institution, we often talk with or survey people to identify influences on employees' behavior	319	4.219	.8878	-1.530	3.212
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.310</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

On formal written information generation, with a grand mean of 4.310.

**Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics for Information Dissemination Measure of Internal Marketing Strategy**

Information dissemination	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
In this institution the management regularly meets with all staff to report about issues relating to the whole organization	319	4.361	.7430	-1.248	1.978
In this institution the management regularly reports back to staff about issues, that affect their working environment	319	4.351	.7579	-1.295	2.063
In this institution, there are regular staff meetings with employees at all levels attending	319	4.223	.8888	-1.534	3.209
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.311</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

On information dissemination, with a grand mean of 4.311.

**Table 4.11 Descriptive Statistics for Response Measure of Internal Marketing Strategy**

Response	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness S.E=.137	Kurtosis S.E=.272
In this institution, when it is found out that employees are unhappy with supervision or management, corrective action is taken	319	4.357	.7424	-1.241	1.971
In this institution, when it is found that employees would like management to modify conditions of employment, the departments make concerted efforts to do so	319	4.342	.7602	-1.269	1.968
In this institution, changes are made to what management does when employee feedback indicates that they are dissatisfied with the status quo	319	4.219	.8913	-1.518	3.127
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.306</b>			

Source: Survey Data, 2015

As shown in table 4.11, on response, with a grand mean of 4.306.

From the foregoing findings, it can be deduced that internal marketing across the institutions surveyed is practiced to a high extent. This can be attributed to the institutions' conventional focus on internal marketing strategies as all employees are observed to be customer-oriented and work together as a team to all their varied scope of customers who may be professional services clients, donors, members, patrons and students. This is of the implication that internal marketing strategy is of great importance to most successful public universities.

#### 4.4 Univariate Analysis of Variance Between Variables

The study employed univariate analysis to establish associations between the demographic information and the study variables, with a view to establish any pertinent trends in responses thereof. This was done for all the three variables in the study and their subscales, including employee performance, internal marketing strategy and employee commitment.

#### 4.5 Correlation Test Results

To aid in both the bivariate analysis and inferential statistics, that is, both linear multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation analysis, composite variables were computed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences.



### Internal Marketing Strategy and Employee Performance Correlation

The study sought to examine the effect of internal marketing strategy on employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya. This informed the first null hypothesis of the study ( $H_{01}$ ) that there is no significant relationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya. This hypothesis was tested through Pearson product moment correlation ( $r$ ) to show the extent of the relationship, guided by the model:  $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \epsilon$  where  $\alpha$  is the constant (intercept),  $Y$  = Employee performance,  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  are the beta Coefficients while  $X$  and  $M$  represent Internal Marketing and Employee Commitment and  $\epsilon$  is the Error Term. The results of the correlation are presented in table 4.29 below.

**Table 4.29: Rrelationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance**

		Employee Performance	Internal Marketing Strategy
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Internal marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	.722**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=319

Source: Survey Data, 2015

Table 4.29 above presents the Pearson correlations for the relationships between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya. From the findings, a very strong and positive correlation was established ( $r = .722$ ;  $P$  value = .000) that was statistically significant at either 0.01 level or 0.05 level of confidence. The positive correlation is of the implication that as internal marketing strategy is enhanced, employee performance increases significantly.

The study thus fails to accept the null hypothesis of the study that states that there is no significant relationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya and accepts the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between internal marketing strategy and employee performance among selected public universities in Kenya. Stigler (2002) offers that the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient measure linear correlation (dependence) between two variables  $X$  and  $Y$ , giving a value between +1 and -1 inclusive, where 1 is total positive correlation, 0 is no correlation, and -1 is total negative correlation.

According to the findings, internal marketing practice is seen to cover four dimensions: Informal information generation; formal face-to-face information generation, formal written information generation and information dissemination. Similarly, Conduit and Mavondo (2001) also categorized the internal marketing activity into various perspectives, which include education and training, management support, internal communication, external communication and human resource management and so on. These dimensions are therefore deemed relevant to the positive effect of internal marketing on employee performance while employee commitment is observed to be the moderating variable.

The finding contradicts with Snell and White (2009) in whose exploratory study on the application of internal marketing in professional services firms, using the qualitative research approach and a sample of 19 professional services firm, found that internal marketing strategy is in practice but are applied at different degrees within the organizations. This current study however basing its source as major public universities found that internal marketing views employees as customers and their works as products

in order to satisfy internal customer's demands and needs hence internal marketing strategy is applied in the general institution fraternity for improved employee performance. The study findings agree with Foreman and Money (2007) who found that the three components of internal marketing which are: reward; retaining and motivating employees have significant impact on their productivity. The study further agrees with Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) who studied internal marketing and its mediating role of organizational competencies and found that the internal marketing mix components such as: top management support and inter-functional co-ordination have significant influence on employees' competencies and performance.

Further, Brooks *et al* (2010) and Quester and Kelly (2009) in a separate study investigating the place of employees in organizational performance of Australian firms' and their study revealed that the most firms surveyed use internal marketing strategy such as: marketing research to generate details on the attitudes; needs and wants of employees which place them in a comfortable position to provide their employees with requisite perquisites that drive them to be more productive. Aziz and Yasin (2004) studied the influence of marketing orientation on marketing competency: the effect of internet marketing integration in Malaysia and their study found that the components of internal marketing orientation with the support of IT tools impact positively on marketing competencies in the Malaysian financial sector.

The positive and statistically significant correlation established between Internal Marketing Strategy and employee performance and the MRA finding that IMS has a positive and significant effect on EP is in tandem with a myriad of studies. In an empirical study Tansuhaj, Randall, and McCullough (2010) found out that through improved job satisfaction, internal marketing enhances employee performance. Ahmed *et al.* (2012) revealed a positive relationship between the Internal marketing practices and employee performance. Hwang and Chi's (2005) research on international hotels in Taiwan also support internal marketing's positive impact on employee performance. Chang and Chang (2007) in their study on hospitals observe that internal marketing has a positive influence on employee performance. Gounaris (2008) in his study observes that employee job satisfaction is partially a function of internal-marketing actions like empowerment, participative decision making and informality of communication.

Iliopoulus and Priporas (2011) found a positive effect of internal marketing on employee performance in their study on hospital staff. An empirical study on retail stores in India, by Nitalla Rajyalakshmi and Kameswari (2009), showed a strong impact of internal marketing factors on job motivation and job satisfaction, and therefore job performance. Ahmad and Al-Borie (2012) studied the impact of internal marketing on job satisfaction in hospitals in Saudi Arabia; his research findings revealed that in addition to job satisfaction, internal marketing had a positive effect on employee performance. Al-Hawary *et al.* (2013) with their study on banks in Jordan empirically proved that internal marketing practices were positively correlated with employee performance.

Further, the finding is in agreement with Souchon and Lings (2001) who believe that the adoption of internal marketing practices has been proposed as a key means of ensuring the levels of staff performance, market orientation, customer satisfaction and ultimate profitability. Furthermore, Voola *et al.* (2003) found that there is a positive relation between internal marketing and developing a market orientation culture among employees, and internal marketing has been considered as an antecedent of market orientation. Kyriazopoulos *et al.*, (2007) also examined the adoption of the internal marketing concept from bank branches' employees and found that internal marketing has a positive effect on market orientation culture among staff. Green *et al* (2011) studied internal marketing: the key to external marketing success in financial organizations and their study revealed that internal promotion; internal product offering; employees reward system; internal marketing support program and integrated employee relationship all have a positive association on employee performance.

From the foregoing findings, it is the researcher's position that the positive association between internal marketing strategy and employee performance can be attributed to other underlying organizational factors. As the objective of internal marketing is to get motivated and customer conscious employees in order to achieve service excellence, the same can be improved if other strategic human resource factors meant to provide a conducive work environment are provided, case in point training needs assessments and strategically designing jobs to make employees further feel engaged, using such designs as job rotation and job enrichment. The presence thereof, of such strategic practices can thus be attributed as having a positive influence on internal marketing strategy buy-in among employees, hence positive performance.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations of the Study**

Internal marketing strategy significantly influences employee performance. With comparably high levels of internal marketing strategy practiced across the institutions and the significantly high employee performance levels thereof, it can be deduced that the internal marketing elements can be enhanced to bring about increased levels of awareness in order to enhance employee commitment and therefore performance. Through the implementation of a formal internal marketing programme in which each of the internal marketing mix elements are understood and communicated to employees, its end is the same that the institution cares about their employees' needs. Furthermore, just like the external customer, internal customers have become more knowledgeable about internal products and services. If employees are aware of the internal mix, they are able to determine their own level of satisfaction with each of these elements and provide feedback when specific items are not meeting their needs.

### **5.1 Recommendations and Policy Implications**

Based on the foregoing findings, their discussions and subsequent conclusions, the following recommendations can be made. The same are presented in terms of the study's implications to theory, policy and practice as well as future studies.

### **5.2 Implications to theory**

The study was anchored on two theories, that is, the resource-based view of the firm and the Internal Fit Model. Whereas RBV proposes that effectively leveraging organizational resources earns the organization competitive advantage, the Internal Fit Model proposes the integration of different HR policies and practices towards superior employee performance. Based on the study findings, it is apparent that employees across various public higher education institutions are the key resources thereof, tasked with the mandate to produce both competitive and marketable graduates. Therefore, to inspire enhanced employee performance, internal marketing strategy by viewing university employees both in the administrative and academic positions as internal customers, is a key strategy towards the improvement of employee performance. This is because individual performance has become an important issue to the public higher education institutions in their preparations for the realization of the mission towards world-class university.

Further, due to extensive changes in business environment, institutions of higher learning need to increase the level of quality and quantity of their products and services. Thus, to achieve this, aligning internal organizational policies and practices towards employees as internal customers who have a key role in the institution, is required.

### 5.3 Implication to Policy and Practice

Policy makers ought to derive cue from these university employees by understanding the significance and applicability of internal marketing strategy in universities; it would eventually lead to focusing attention and resources on establishing internal marketing systems in universities. This would be of benefit to all stakeholders of the university service setting, the most important being the students. Public university administration should hire employees who are likely to become linked to the organization and should create clear and realistic job and organizational previews for their employees.

### 5.4 Suggestions for further study

The paper puts forth by the present study is that whereas internal marketing strategy and employee commitment independently have a significant effect on employee performance among public universities in Kenya, employee commitment does not significantly determine the effect of internal marketing strategy on employee performance thereof. The results of this study suggest several avenues for future research.

The study indicates the scope and necessity of further study on internal marketing strategy in the university setting. Further studies on internal marketing in university setting will aid in validating generalization of results of prior empirical studies on internal marketing in other service settings. More importantly, it will also help in identifying what elements of internal marketing Universities needs to focus attention on and how employee satisfaction can be achieved through it.

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